(b) if so, the reasons for delay in its implementation; and

(c) the method proposed to be evolved ensuring that nominees are not harassed in getting back the principal amount on demise of senior citizens?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) No, Sir, there has been no delay.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The Life Insurance Corporation of India has informed that the claim procedure has been kept simple.

Amendment to PPF and Post Office Schemes

*35.SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to answer to Starred Question 630 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 6th May, 2003 and state:

(a) whether he has received specific suggestions for the amendment of some of the provisions of PPF scheme, 1968 and Post Office Income Scheme;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon; and

(c) if no action has so far been taken, by when the same is likely to be taken?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) to (c) Apart from the question and replies of 6th May, 2003 and the hon'ble Member's own suggestions, representation on various issues relating to small savings' schemes are received. These issues covering various aspects like interest rates, etc., provide valuable inputs for framing Government's policy towards small savings.

Places declared protected by ASI

*36. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that ASI has declared certain religious places like Jama Masjid in Delhi as protected places;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the money donated as offering will be utilized for development of this place as in the case with offerings at Vaishno Devi shrine?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) The Jama Masjid in Delhi under religious worship has not been declared as monument of national importance by the Archaeological Survey of India. There are 949 Centrally protected monuments under worship which comprise of 701 temples, 11 churches and 237 mosques under the jurisdiction of Archaeological Survey of India.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Fiscal situation

*37. DR. A.R. KIDWAI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Standing Committee on Finance has painted a grim picture of the fiscal situation of the Central and State Governments and warned that unless immediate steps are taken to reverse this, some State Governments would be compelled to declare financial emergency;

(b) if so, whether the Committee's recommendations have been forwarded to the State Governments; and

(c) to what extent the Central and State Governments have agreed to implement the suggestions made by the Committee to avoid the emergency crisis in the States?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Twenty two States have drawn up Medium Term Fiscal Reforms Programmes aimed at fiscal consolidation, power sector reforms and public sector enterprise reforms. States are also participating in a debt swap scheme for retiring their stock of high cost debt with current low coupon market borrowings.